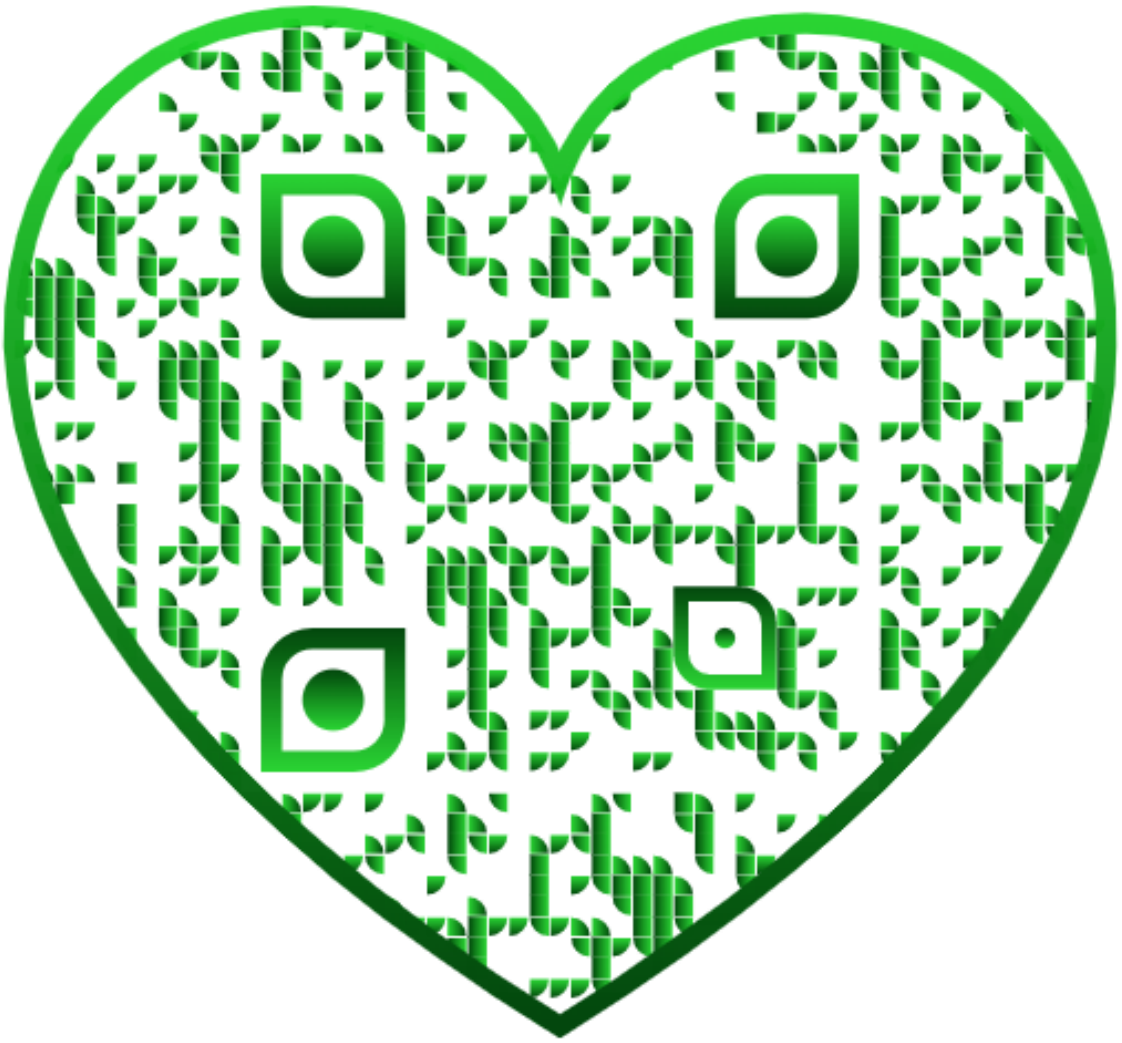
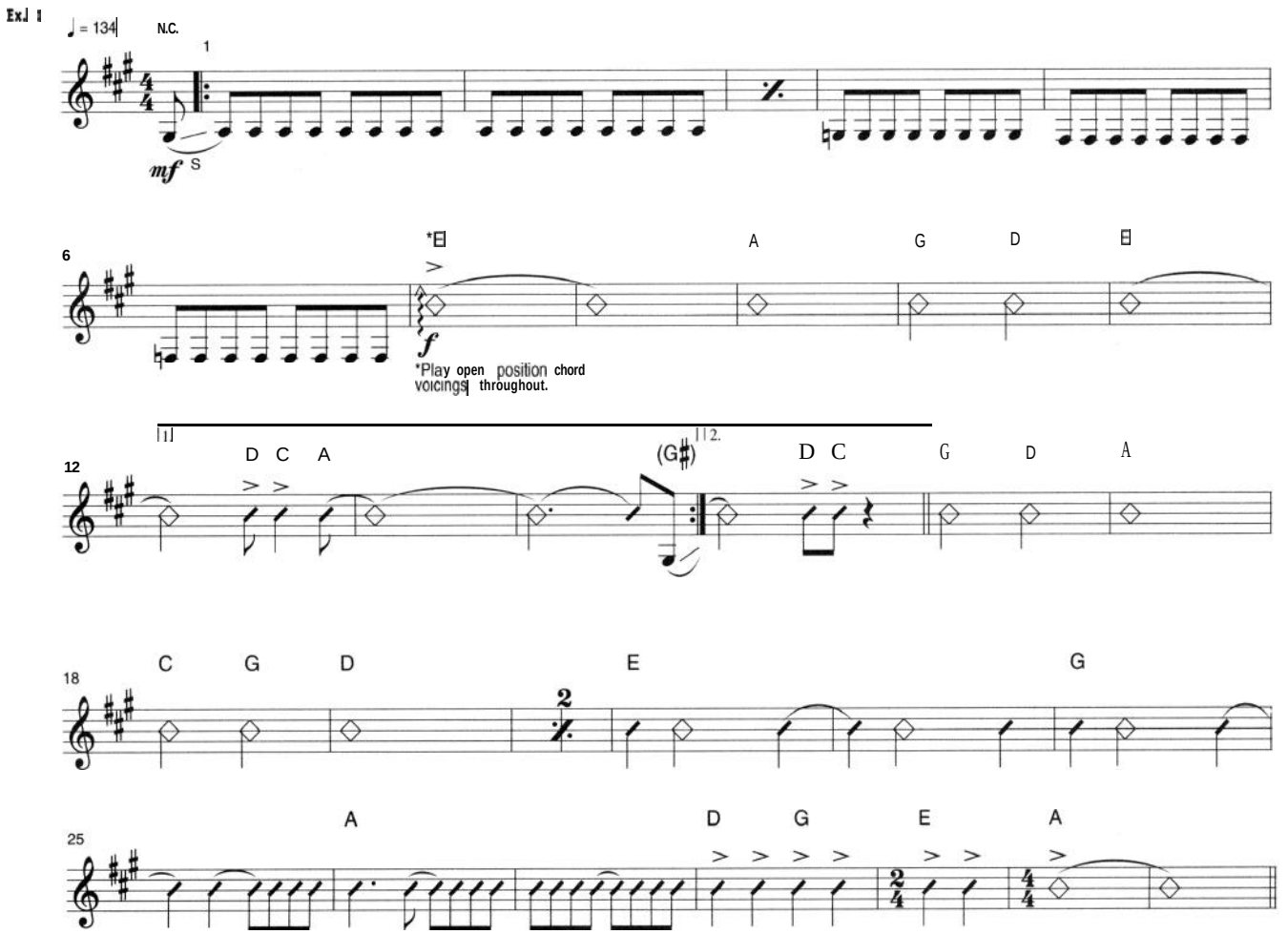
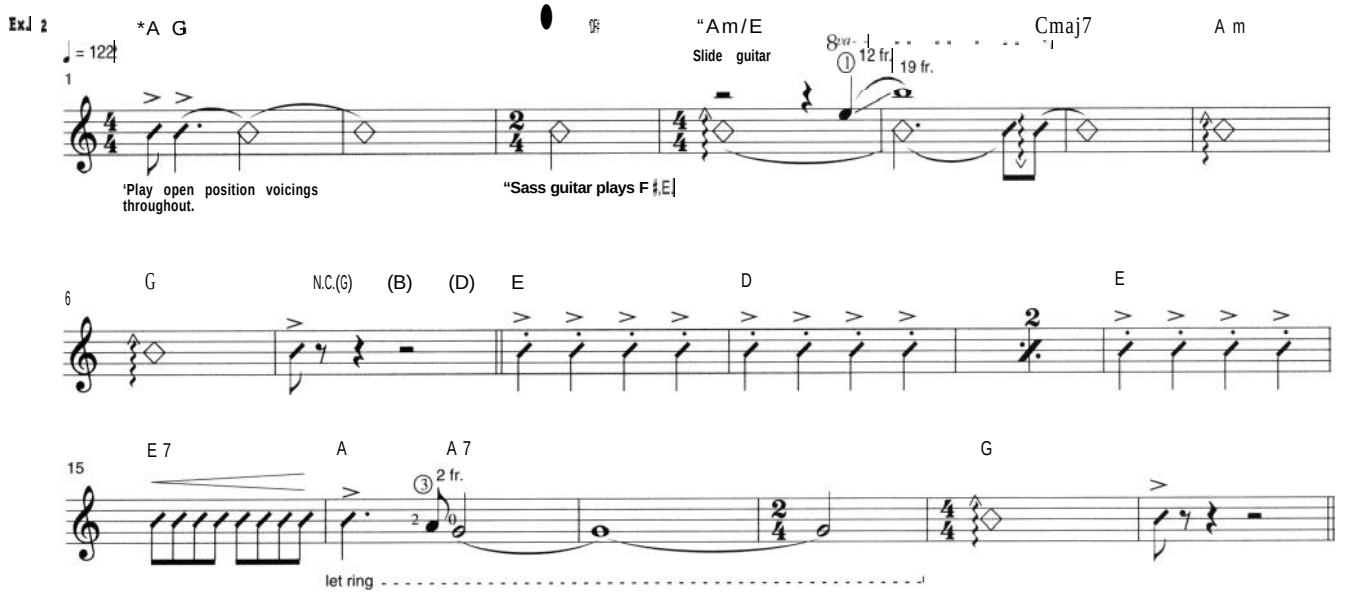
MAD GENIUS **Syd Barrett may have named his band after Georgia bluesmen Pink Anderson and Floyd Council, but Pink Floyd bore no trace of blues influence until well after Barrett's departure. The quintessential psychedelic pop band, Barrett, Roger Waters, Rick Wright, and Nick Mason should also be acknowledged as among the founding fathers of today's alternative and grunge styles. Pink Floyd's first singles, "Arnold Layne" and "See Emily Play," and their** 1967 **debut album, The** *Piper At* ***The*** **Cafes** ***Of*** *Dawn,* **all written by Barrett within a mere six months, still sound remarkably contemporary. "Lucifer Sam" or "Interstellar Overdrive" wouldn't sound out of place in the repertoire of Nirvana or countless other current bands. The Beatlesque production of these recordings is understandable, considering that the fab ones were in the midst of making** *Sgt. Pepper* **at the time, and the two bands, both**

BY JESSE GRESS

recording at Abbey Road Studios, would get together to check out each other's music. But Pink Floyd were hardly Beatles soundalikes. Barrett's idiosyncratic pop tunes, the band's extended free-form improvs, and liberally applied echo and sound effects earned Pink Floyd the "space rock" moniker they would despise well through their second incarnation with David Cilmour. Those in search of new Floyd gossip can stop reading here. We'll only be analyzing the band's work up through 1979's *The* **Wall, an era that encompasses a staggering variety of guitar textures. While Barrett's guitar solos were notoriously, shall we say,** over **the top, he had a knack for coming up with extremely clever tunes. Typical of early Floyd pop-psychedelia, Ex. 1 features an unusual 14-bar verse progression that combines a descending single-note figure with open-position power chords (we can get through these without tab, right?). It's gloriously simple and invigorating. And don't be surprised if the 16-bar chorus induces a severe bout of windmillitis. (Careful with that whammy bar, Eugene!)**



The progression in Ex. 2 clocks in at an unlikely 20 bars but manages to feel quite natural. The nine-bar verse has a 2/4 rhythmic "glitch," and an ethereal slide guitar overdub implies an *Em* chord that is never actually fretted. The chorus smells a bit like the Yardbirds' "Shapes Of Things," but only for four of eleven bars.



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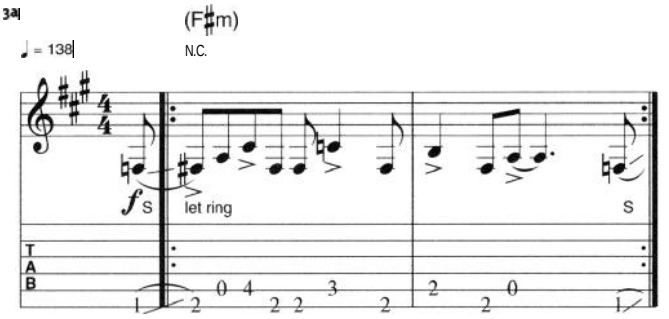
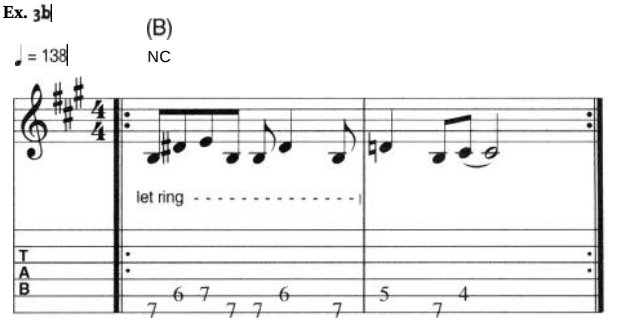
Ex. 3a casts Barrett in the rightful role of proto-punk grunge pioneer. It's also indicative of the "doom and gloom' element that remained a Floyd characteristic even after Syd's departure. Ex. 3b adapts the line to the IV chord for a twisted, quasi-blues effect.

Ex. 3a

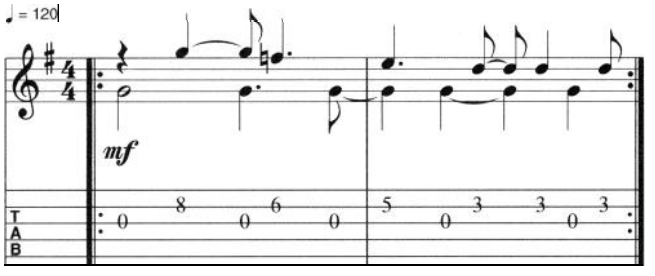


Ex. 3b

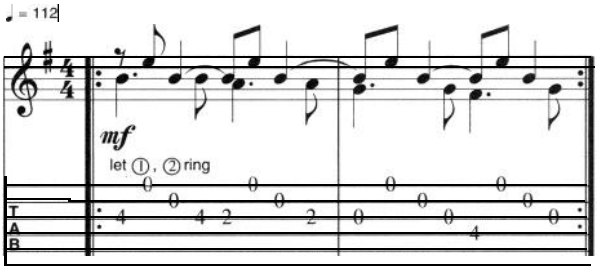


Barrett's accompaniment style had lighter moments. The jangly figure in Ex. 4a reinforces the notion that Syd tended to view the fingerboard vertically, playing along, rather than across, the strings. Lovely as it is, singing a sustained Band switching to A#on beat 3 really brings Ex. 4b to life.

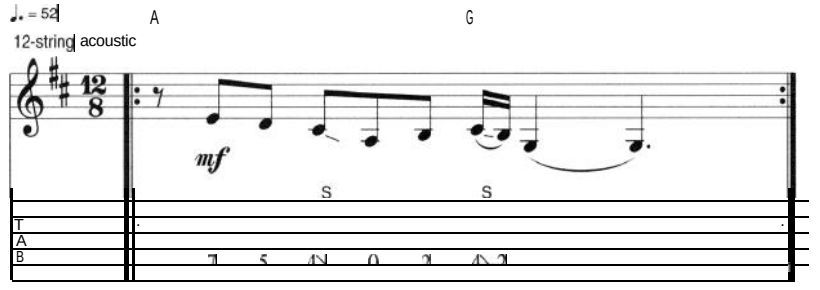
Ex. 4a



Ex. 4b

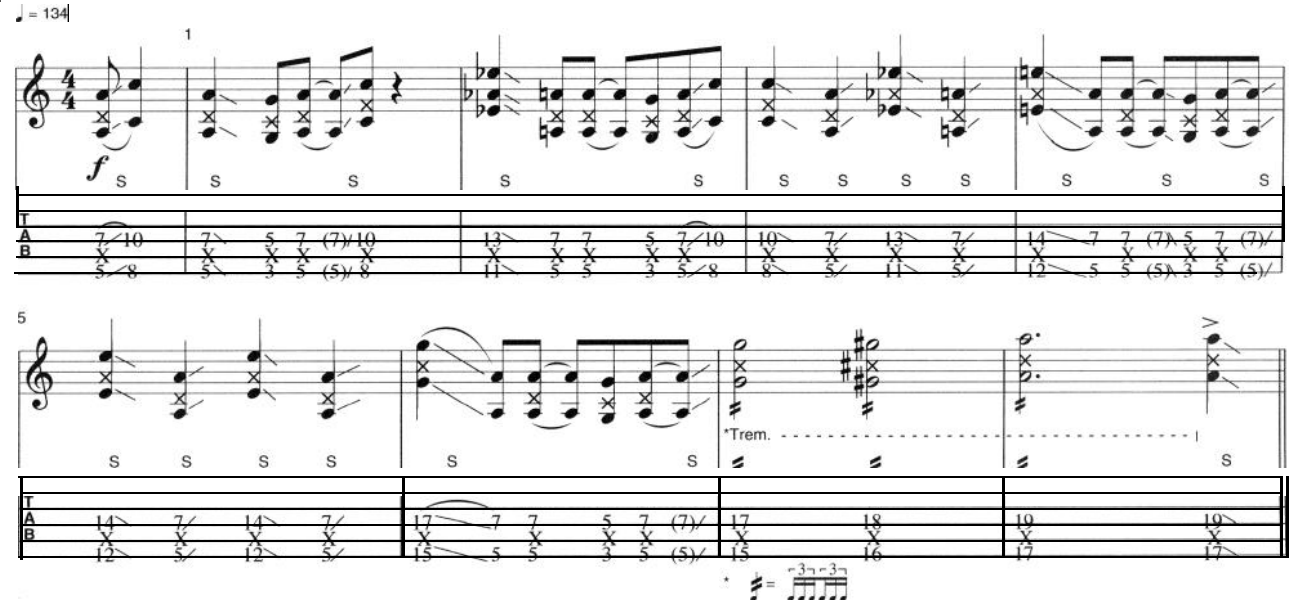


Ex. 5

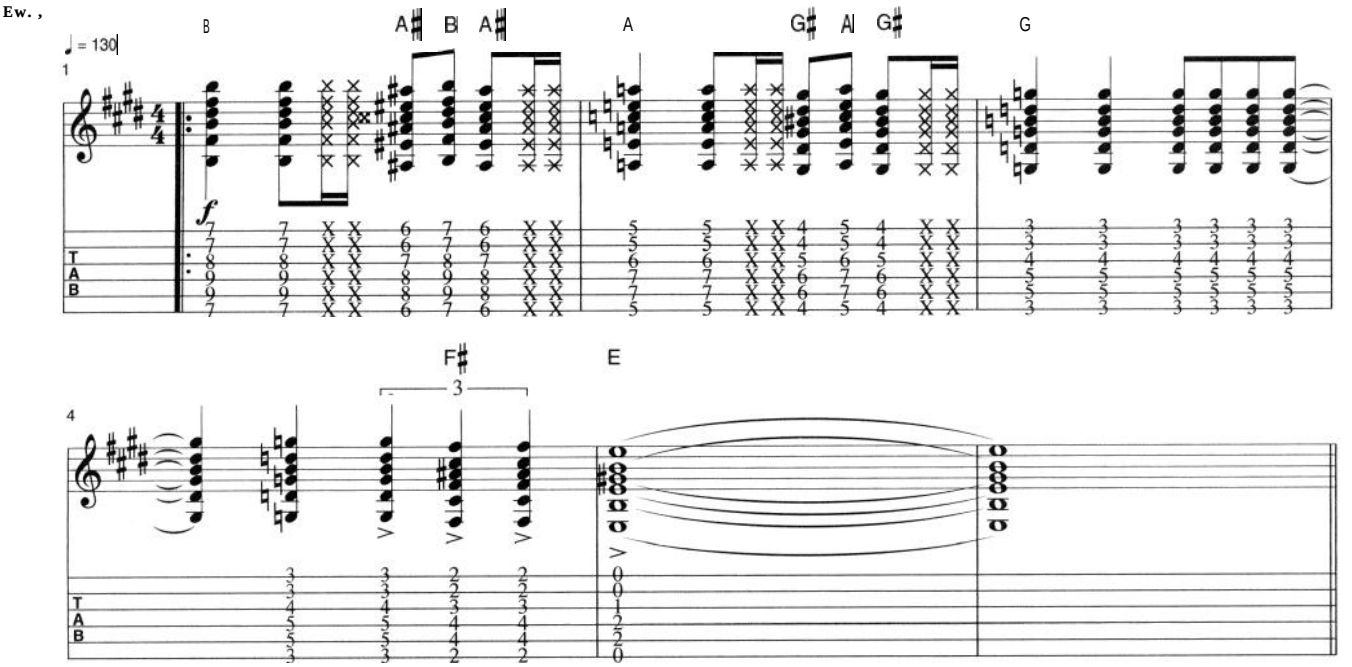


Though Barrett used a 12-string acoustic to create the octaves in Ex. 5, his full-blown octave solo in Ex. 6 features those of the Montgomery kind. Despite its chaotic qualities, there is form, thematic development, and other good musical stuff. The ♭5 of doom rears its ugly head before resolving and completing a surprisingly cohesive solo statement.

Ex. 6

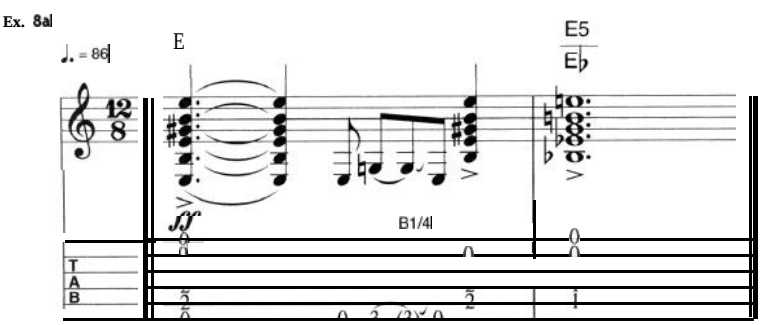
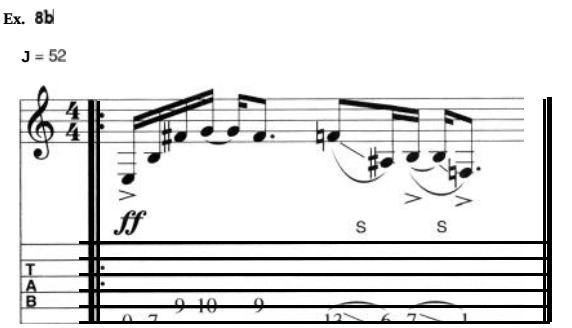
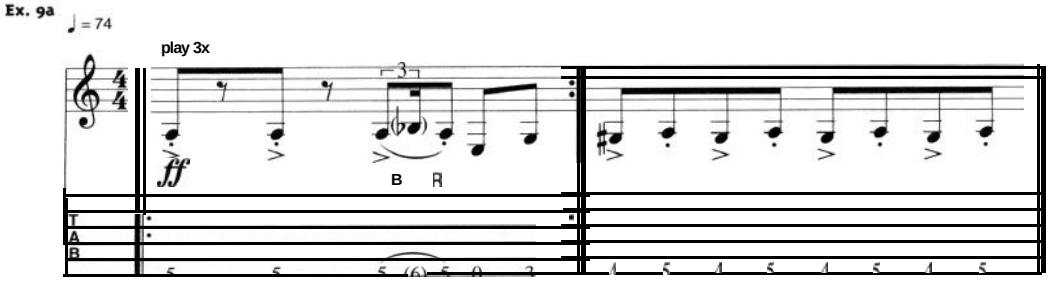


Ex. 7 is full of the kind of raw energy that has fueled "new" musical trends for the past 20 years. No shame about using full barre chords here! For a slightly toned-down version, try playing only the sixth-string roots except for the final *E* chord.

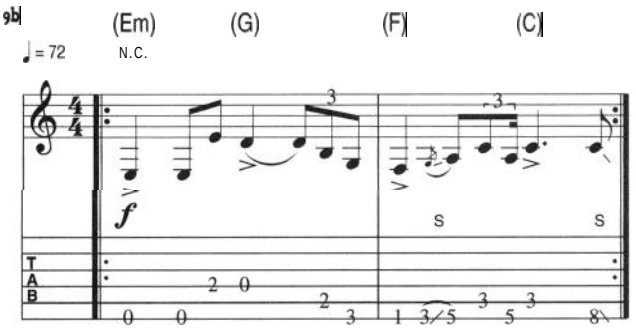


After Barrett's departure in 1968, David Gilmour began his tenure by playing and singing Syd's parts, but it wasn't long before his musical personality dominated. His first recording with the band was *A* Saucer *Full* Of Secrets, which also featured Barrett on several tracks. Giimour brought to the band a rich variety of influences, including the earthy folk and blues elements that gradually supplanted the Barrett-era psychedelia. Together with Roger Waters' ongoing penchant for sound effects, Gilmour's vocabulary forged Pink Floyd's new sound, culminating in masterworks such as *Umagumma, Meddle, Atom Heart Mother, Dark Side Of The Moon, Animals,* and *The Wall.*

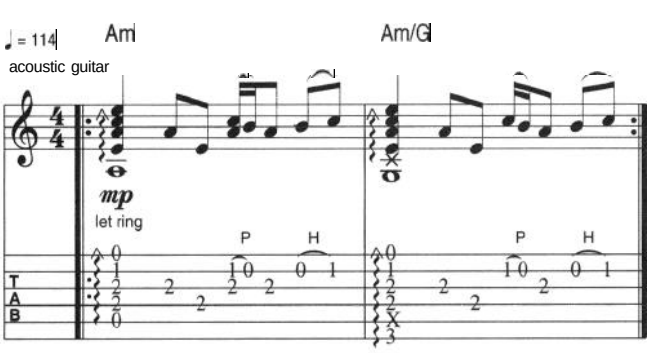
Many of Gilmour's two-bar riffs approach total heaviosity. Witness Ex. 8a, a Delta blues from hell that ends in unsettling bitonality, and Ex. 8b cool both for its choice of notes and their phrasing. Slightly less scary Ex. 9a inserts a spooky ♭2 (*B♭*) into an otherwise pedestrian (dare I say Spinal Tapian?) blues-rock riff. On a more uplifting note, Ex. 9b majestically outlines an *Em-G-F-C* progression.



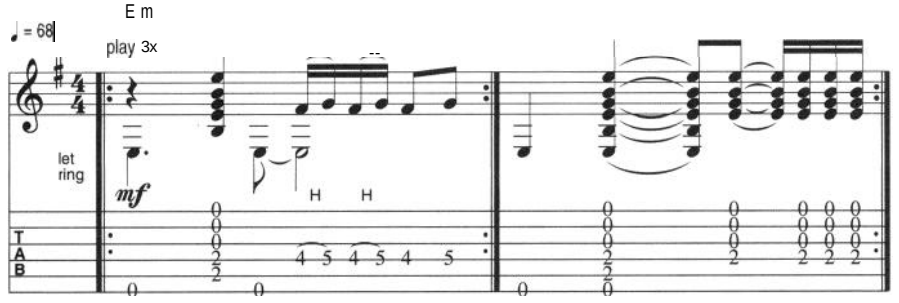
Ex. 9b

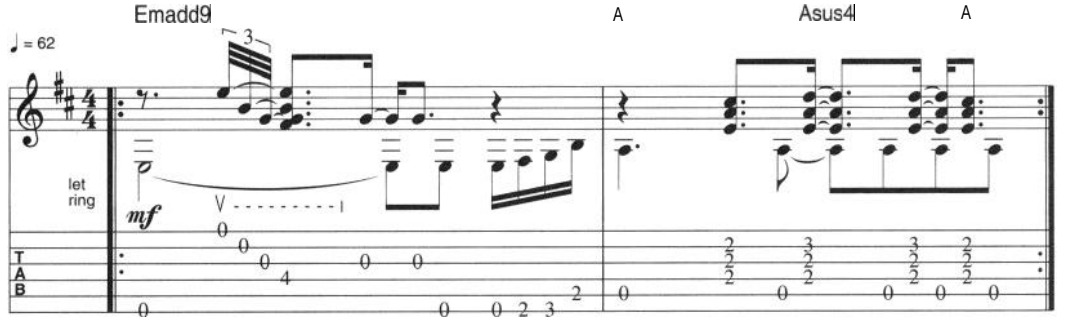


Ex. 10

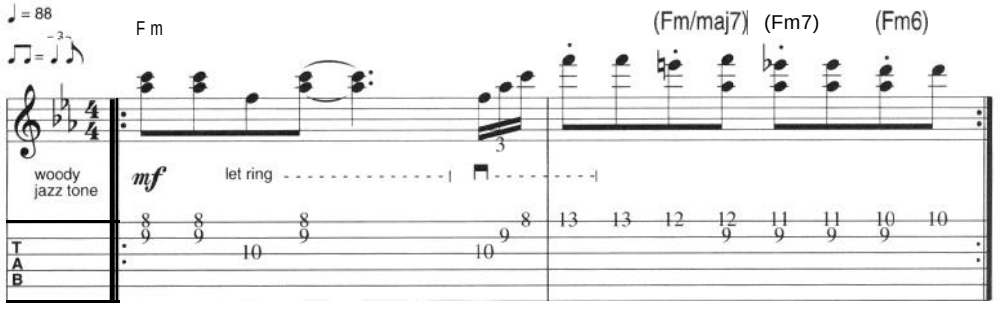


Traces of Gilmour's folk roots (he learned to play in part from a Pete Seeger instructional record) surface frequently in his Floydal accompaniments. The dreamy two-bar sequences in examples 10 through 12 illustrate his penchant for minor tonalities with added 9ths and Dorian-based i-IV progressions. The jazzy figure in Ex. 13 conjures a smoky cabaret vibe, further testimony to Gilmour's versatility.

Ex. 11

Ex. 12

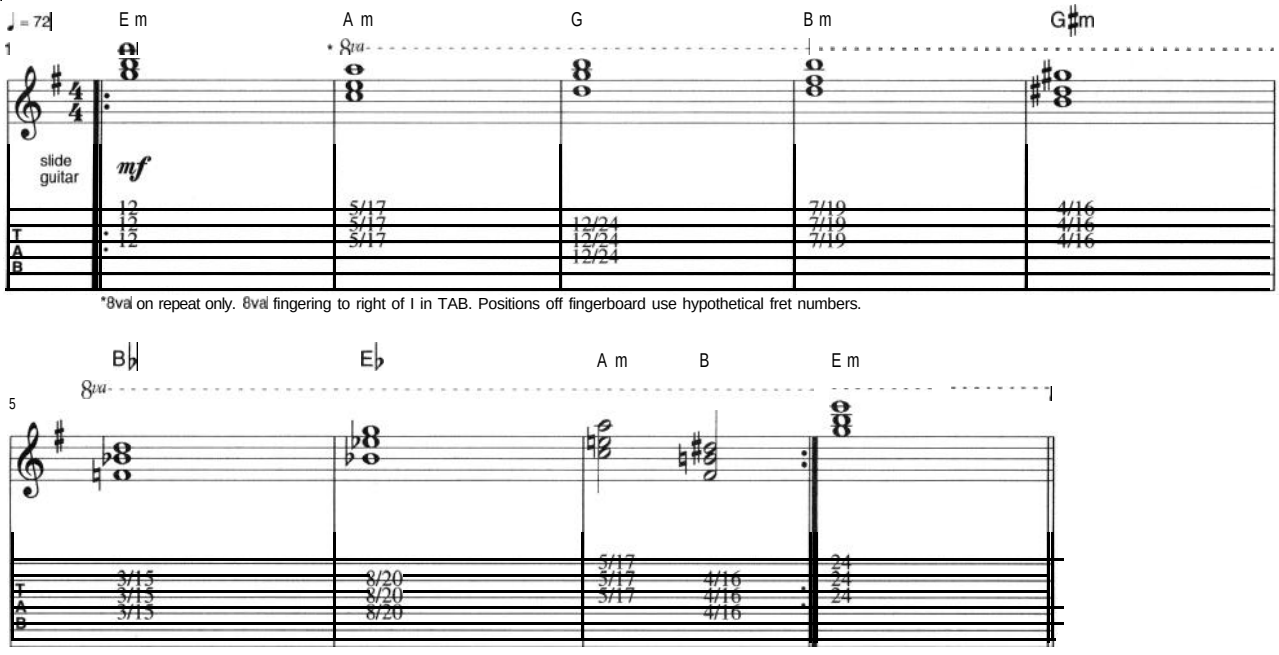


Ex. 13



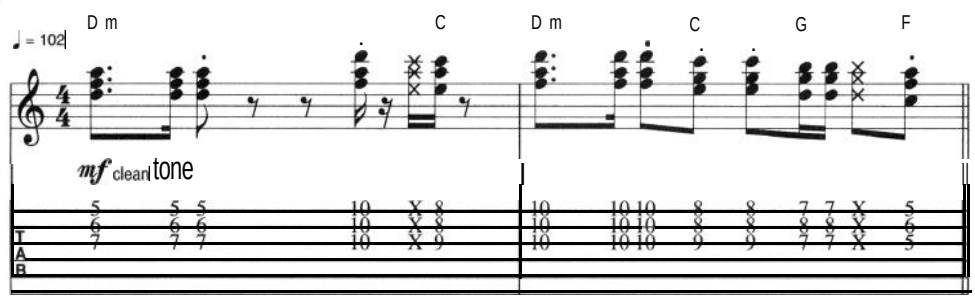
Gilmour eschews conventional bottleneck technique, preferring to slide on a 6-string lap steel with tunings such as *E, B, E, G, B, E* and *D, G, D, G, B, E* (low to high). The latter allows minor and major triads to be played on strings 1, 2, and 3 and 2, 3, and 4, respectively. This works just as well with standard tuning and slide technique, so grab a bottleneck and try Ex. 14. Bring out the melodic possibilities inherent in the progression by exploring each arpeggiated chord shape.

Ex. 14



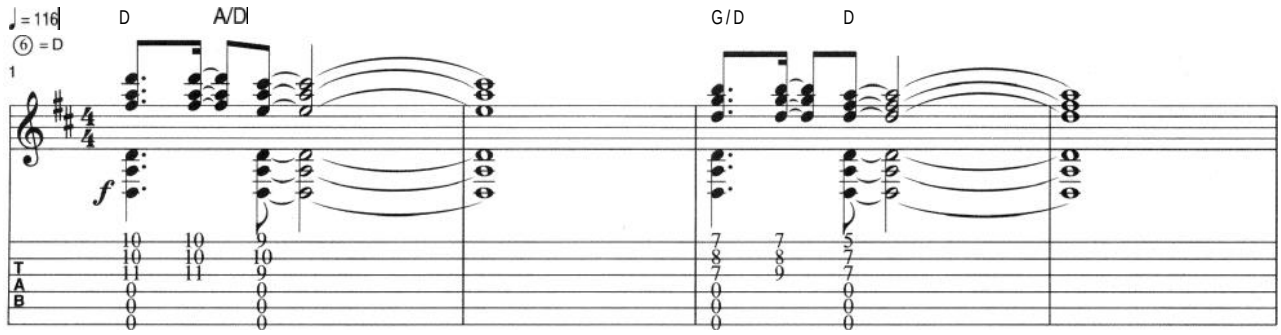
*8va on repeat only. 8va fingering to right of I in TAB. Positions off fingerboard use hypothetical fret numbers.

Ex. 15

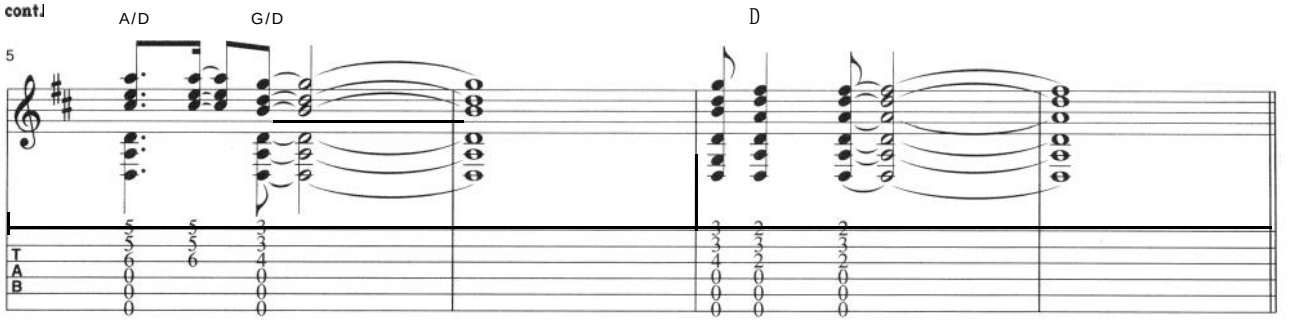


Gilmour's extensive use of triads reveals an awareness of chord/scale relationships. He definitely has a handle on the sort of funky, syncopated diatonic triads that appear in Ex. 15. The triad-over-a-held-bass-note approach of Ex. 16 yields a chordal riff of amphitheatrical proportions, extra bigness courtesy of the dropped-D tuning. Examples 17a and 17b fuse rockabilly-style open-string voicings with eerie bitonality.

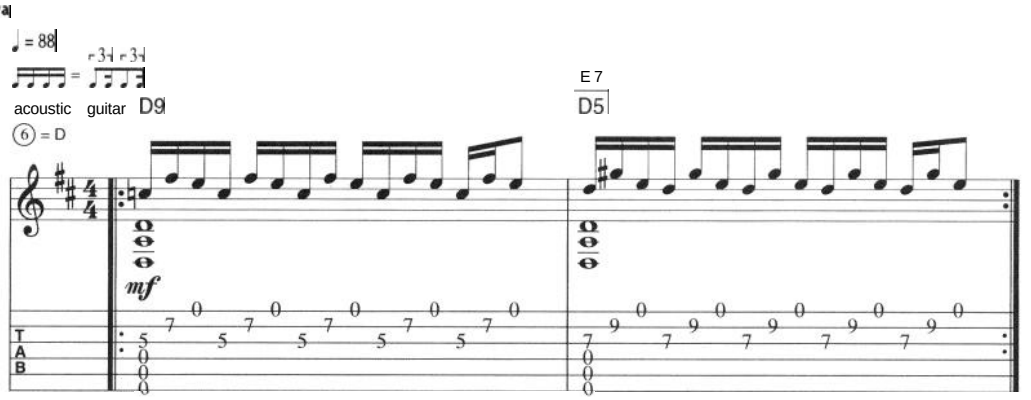
Ex. 16



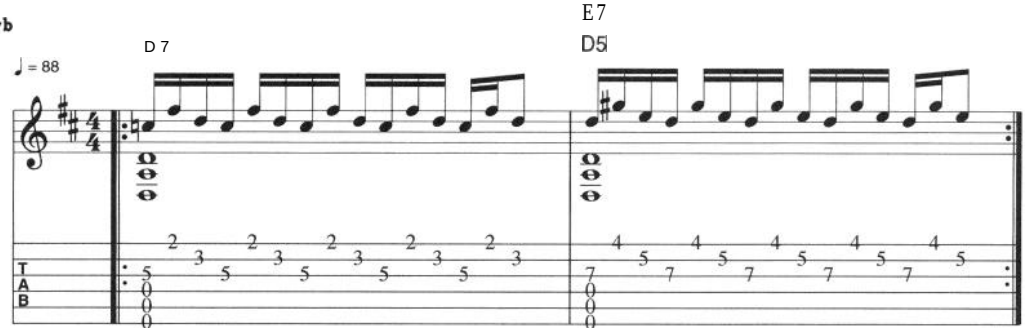
Ex. 16 cont.



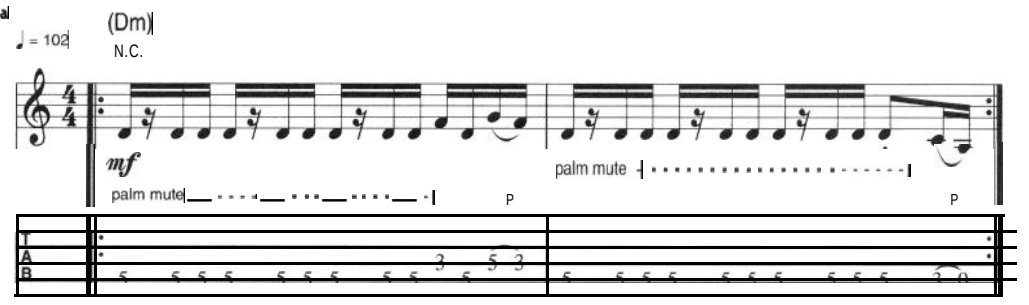
Ex. 17a



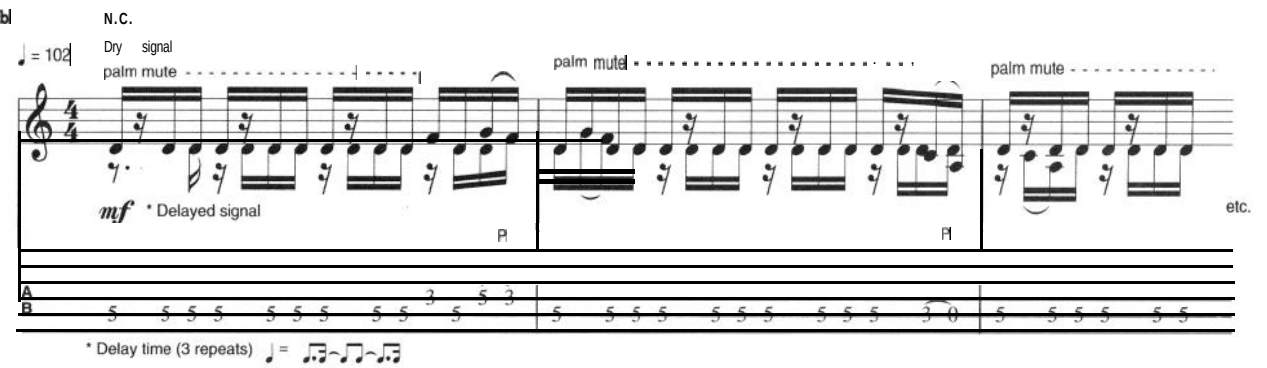
Ex. 17b



Ex. 18a

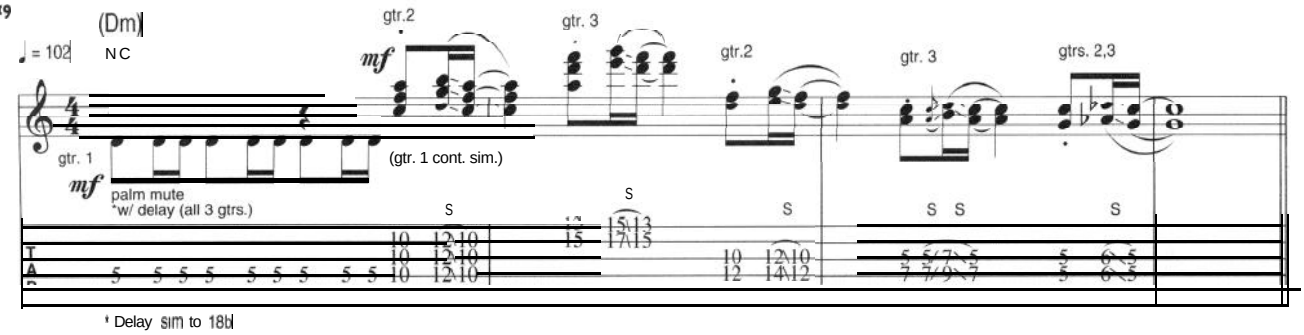


Ex. 18b



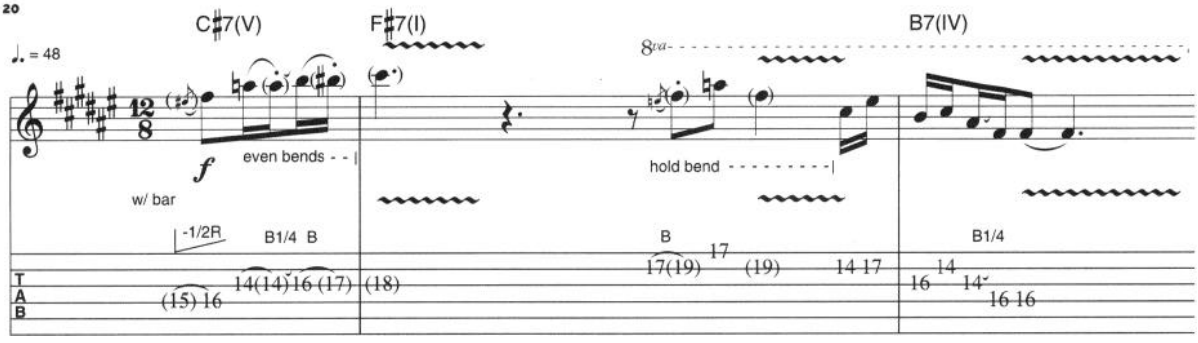
Extensive use of echo figures prominently in Gilmour's sound. He can play a basic figure such as Ex. 18a and, by applying several repeats three-quarters of a beat apart, create an uninterrupted flow of sixteenth-notes (Ex. 18b). Mixed triads and double-stops get the same echo treatment in Fx. 19, which includes a brief yet effective stab outside of the established tonality. Simultaneously playing the parts labeled "guitar 3" and "guitar 4" presents no great problem, but to pull off all three you'll need two delays, one with an infinite hold or sampling mode.

Ex. 19

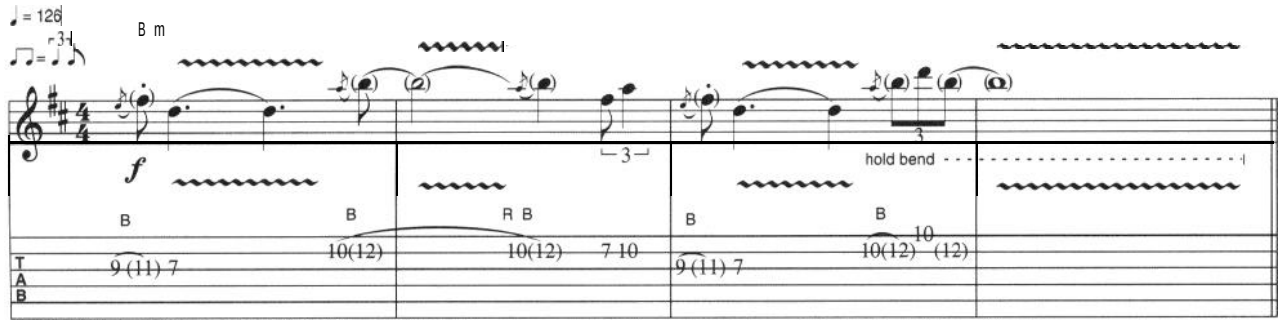


As if it needs to be said, David Gilmour plays blues-style licks with Herculean authority. Ex. 20, which kicks off a slow blues chorus, is right up there with Jeff Beck's faux-slide vibrato bar technique. Ex. 21's textbook call-and-response phrasing is laced with soulful vibrato. The muscular two-step bend in Ex. 22 works best with a reinforced, three-finger bending technique. (Not recommended for first string use!)

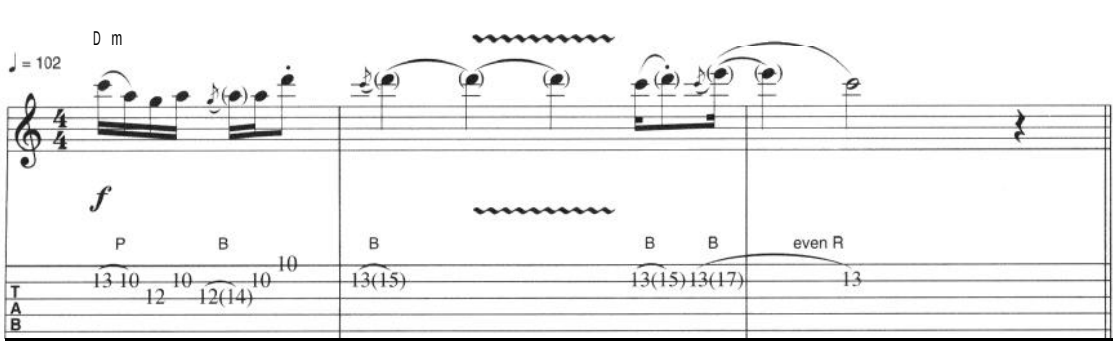
Ex. 20



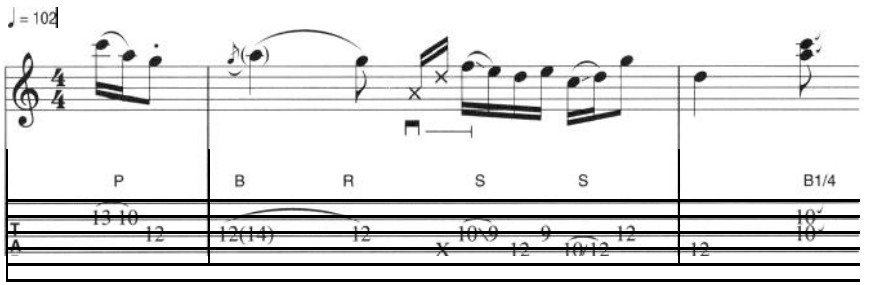
Ex. 21

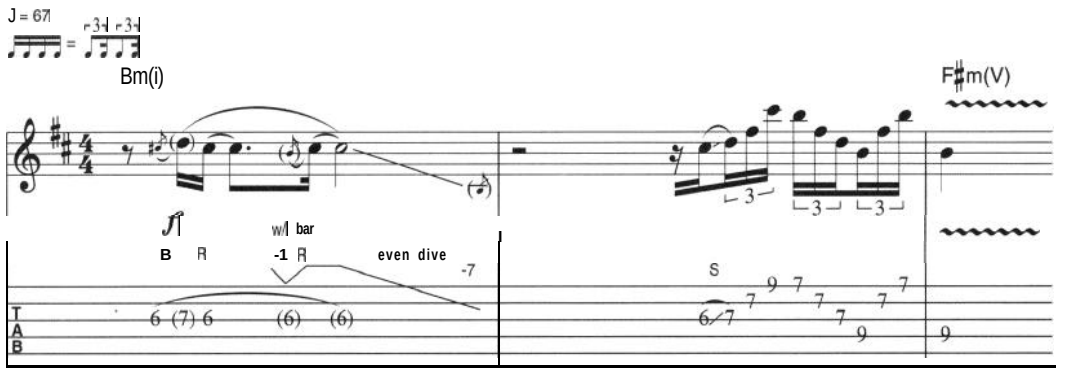
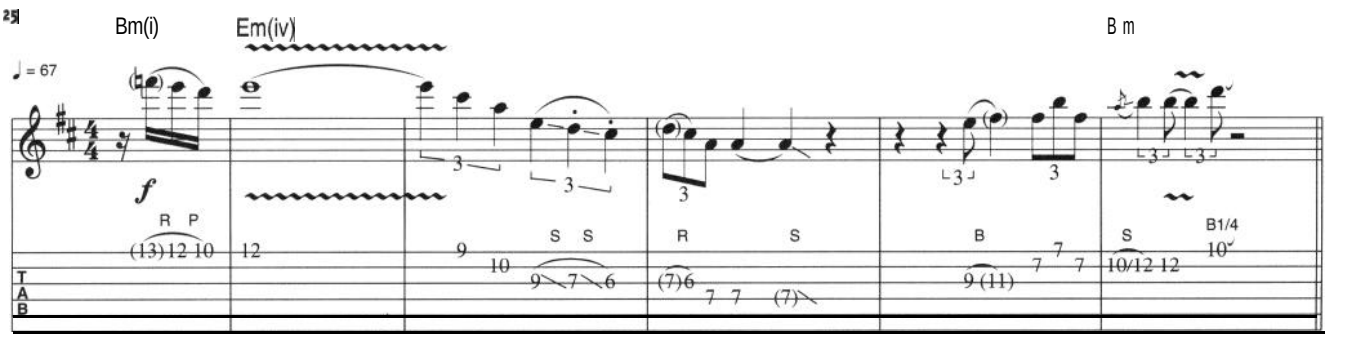


Ex. 22



The 9th shows up as often in Gilmour's soloing as in his chording. In Ex. 23, it colors a Dpentatonic-minor lick. There's even heavier emphasis on the 9th in Ex. 24, where string bends and bar manipulations segue to a smooth *Bmadd9* arpeggio. Although this fingering lends itself to sweep picking, Gilmour alternate-picks every note after the opening slur. In Ex. 25, trademark quarter-note triplets glue a superimposed descending *Asus* arpeggio to the underlying Eminor harmony. It's a fine example of Gilmour's uncanny ability to mutate standard blues-rock King-isms into a highly original solo voice ideally suited to Pink Floyd's harmonically adventurous compositions.

Ex. 25

Ex. 24



Ex. 25